



Honoring Our Veterans

Background

It is our duty and obligation to honor the service of those who help ensure the safety and security of our citizens.

Solution

Senate Democrats are proud of our veterans. We recognize that we best honor veterans' commitment to this country by keeping faith with our commitment to them and their families.

Session Victories

Military service credit

The Legislature approved Senate Bill 5112 to qualify veterans from the recent military campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq for military service credit in their state retirement accounts.

Tuition and fee waivers

State colleges and universities may currently grant tuition waivers for veterans, but the laws authorizing them to do so are piecemeal and complex. The Legislature approved House Bill 1174 to consolidate these pieces into one statute and cover all prior and future conflicts, so no eligible veterans fall through the cracks. It also expands eligibility to include a veteran's spouse and children.

Relief for low-income veterans

To help ensure that services are provided for low-income or disadvantaged veterans and their families, the Legislature approved HB 1189 to establish veterans assistance programs in every county in the state. The programs will receive input from veterans advisory boards, and will also ensure that help is provided to the low-income families of veterans who have passed away.

Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs

In 2001, the Legislature created a Joint Committee on Veterans and Military Affairs to make recommendations on veterans and active military affairs issues to the Legislature, and to provide oversight for the state Department of Veterans Affairs and the Washington Military Department. The committee was originally intended to disband at the end of 2005, but it has been very effective in bringing important veterans issues to lawmakers' attention. The Legislature approved HB 1261 to make it permanent.

Property tax relief for widows and widowers of veterans

HB 1509 provides property tax relief for senior citizen widows and widowers of disabled, honorably discharged veterans.